

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 MANILA 09448 201041Z
ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T MANILA 9448

EXDIS

FOR HOLBROOKE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, RP
SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS: DISCUSSION WITH PRESIDENT MARCOS, JUNE 20

REF: A. STATE 141816; B. MANILA 9445; C. MANILA 9145

1. DURING LUNCH AFTER BRIEFING JUNE 20 I INFORMED PRESIDENT MARCOS ASIDE AND PRECISELY CONCERNING REFTEL A, PARA 3. HE COMMENTED THAT HE HAD NOT INTENDED FOR "THE USG TO ASSUME INVESTIGATORY FUNCTIONS" BUT RATHER ONLY TO PROVIDE HIM WITH LEADS FROM INFORMATION ALREADY AVAILABLE. I EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT THIS WAS CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD IN WASHINGTON, BUT THAT I WOULD REPORT HIS REACTION TO REMOVE ANY POSSIBILITY OF DOUBT. I ADDED, HOWEVER, MY DEFINITE IMPRESSION THAT WASHINGTON WISHED TO CONVEY THAT PROVING SUCH LEADS WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE. MARCOS APPEARED TO ACCEPT THIS IN GOOD SPIRIT.

2. I REFERRED TO VALENCIA'S COLUMN TODAY IN THE DAILY EXPRESS ALLEGING THAT THE EMBASSY HAS "MISREAD PRESIDENT MARCOS' ADHERENCE TO HUMAN RIGHTS AS WEAKNESS: AND IS "FLASHING THE WRONG READINGS TO WASHINGTON." I ACKNOWLEDGED BEING MIFFED BY THIS ALLEGATION, TO THE POINT OF HAVING RESPONDED
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BY NOTE TO VALENCIA, WHICH PROABLY WAS A MISTAKE, I SAID, SINCE A DIPLOMAT CAN SELDOM WIN THAT KIND OF A CONTEST WITH A COLUMNIST (REFTEL B). MARCOS SAID HE HAD NOT SEEN THE COLUMN, BUT WOULD TALK TO VALENCIA, WHOM HE CERTAINLY DID NOT WISH TO INTERPRET HIM OR US IN THIS MANNER. I ADDED THAT THE COLUMN WAS PRECISELY CONTRARY TO MY POSITION THAT ADHERENCE TO THE PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS EXPRESSES,

REFLECTS AND REQUIRES STRENGTH. MARCOS INDICATED HIS AGREEMENT, SAID THAT I SHOULD TELL WASHINGTON THAT HE HAS BEEN TALKING WITH THE MILITARY AFTER OUR MEETING LAST WEEK, AND SPECIFICALLY WITH METROCOM AND THE MANILA POLICE. HE MUSED THAT IT DOES TAKE STRENGTH, AND "YES, SOME BIG BRASS, SOME SENIOR MILITARY MAY BE INVOLVED. THERE ARE LIABLE TO BE SOME CHANGES LATER ON."

3. DEFENSE SECRETARY ENRILE SITTING ON MY LEFT CLEARLY OVERHEARD THIS LATTER PART OF THE ABOVE CONVERSATION, BUT SAID NOTHING UNTIL MARCOS ASKED HIM TO CONFIRM THAT THE HERERA INVESTIGATION HAS BEEN FINISHED. ENRILE DID SO, GIVING ME THE IMPRESSION THAT THIS IS VERY RECENT NEWS. MARCOS ADDED THAT HE HAD DIRECTED THE ACCELERATION OF THE INVESTIGATION AFTER OUR MEETING LAST WEEK.

4. UPON PARTING AFTER LUNCH, MARCOS SAID THAT WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH ME FURTHER ON THESE HUMAN RIGHTS MATTERS.

5. COMMENT: THE ABOVE CONVERSATION TOOK PLACE IN THE PRESENCE OF THE ENTIRE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL (SEPTTEL) BUT ONLY BETWEEN MARCOS AND MYSELF AND, AS INDICATED, ENRILE, AND POSSIBLY IN ITS LATTER PORTION ALSO WITHIN EARSHOT OF FOREIGN SECRETARY ROMULO, WHO SAT ON MARCOS' RIGHT. THE CONVERSATION WAS ONLY PART OF A RUNNING DIALOGUE THROUGHOUT LUNCH COVERING MANY SUBJECTS WITH CONSIDERABLE GOOD HUMOR. ALL IN ALL, THE PERFORMANCE SEEMED BOUND IF NOT INTENDED TO CONVEY TO THE OTHER GUESTS THAT THE AMERICANS ARE IN GOOD FAVOR THESE DAYS. THIS REINFORCES IMPRESSIONS
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GAINED AFTER A FOUR-HOUR TOUR YESTERDAY WITH MARCOS AND SECRETARY BERGLAND, DURING WHICH MARCOS CALLED ME BY FIRST NAME THROUGHOUT (WHICH BILL SULLIVAN USED TO SAY WAS A SURE SIGN OF APPROVAL), CALLED ME UP FROM THE AUDIENCE TO SIT ON THE PODIUM WITH HIM AND THE SECRETARY, AND INTERRUPTED SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE TANCO'S REMARKS TO DIRECT HIM TO INTRODUCE THE AMERICAN MINISTER.

6. I CITE THESE INDICATORS BECAUSE THEY SUGGEST THAT OUR PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP PROBABLY HAS SURVIVED, EVEN PERHAPS PROSPERED FROM, THE CANDID DISCUSSION OF TOUGH HUMAN RIGHTS MATTERS ON JUNE 14 (REF C). MORE IMPORTANTLY, MARCOS' ACCELERATION OF THE HERRERA INVESTIGATION, REPORTED DISCUSSIONS WITH THE MILITARY, METROCOM AND MANILA POLICE, AND HINT OF POSSIBLE ACTION AGAINST CULPABLE SENIOR OFFICERS SUGGESTS THAT HE NOT ONLY HAS GOTTEN THE MESSAGE, BUT MAY INTEND TO ACT UPON IT. TIME WILL TELL.

7. MEANWHILE, I FULLY AGREE THAT WE CAN AFFORD TO LEAVE

WELL ENOUGH ALONE FOR THE TIME BEING, AND TO LIMIT
OURSELVES TO WATCHING, LISTENING, AND OFFEREING ENCOURAGE-
MENT WHERE WARRANTED BY GOP ACTIONS.
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